A

SLIGHT SKETCH

OF

REMOTE AND PROXIMATE CAUSES

OF

AFFECTIONS OF THE STOMACH,

ERRONEOUSLY TERMED

NERVOUS OR BILIOUS;

WITH

A FEW PLAIN DIRECTIONS

FOR THE PREVENTION AND CURE

OF

DYSPEPSIA.

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DYSPEPSIA,

OR

INDIGESTION.

SHOULD the following observations be deemed worthy the attention of Dyspeptic patients, no apology will be requisite, for presuming to add to the great variety of medical publications, which daily issue from the press.

Improvement and reform are become the fashionable pursuits of the times, and among the philosophical researches which have enlightened every branch of science, those that more immediately conduce to the happiness of mankind have not been neglected. In the Arts and Sciences their progress has been rapid: the mind of man, freed from the fetters which cramped its improvement, has burst forth with energy, and soared with strength and velocity towards the summit of perfection. Unshackled by superstitious reverence for antiquated notions or received opinions, it has dared to think for itself; throwing aside as dangerous and fallacious those vulgar errors, which, heretofore disgraced the schools of philosophy, and opposed the happiness of the human race. No longer confined to those subjects, which excite and exercise curiosity, or solicit admiration, it combines utility with truth; and the philosopher has the gratification of contributing, no less to the benefit than to the amusement of his fellow creatures.

An exactness of reasoning and a clearness of demonstration have kept pace with modern discovery; not content with the unmeaning pomp of terms, without annexed ideas, Science now rejects all support, except from simple fact or rational deduction.

No science contributes more to the ease and comfort of individuals than that of Medicine; and in no branch of knowledge have improvements been more conspicuous or more rapid. Whether we reflect on the labours of the chemist, the researches of the anatomist, or the skill and attention of the physician, the same striking features of improvement will be found to characterize each department.

Fortunately for mankind, the advancement of medical knowledge has kept pace with the accumulation of diseases: the bilious fever, first noticed in the Mediterranean, by Cleghorn, afterwards by Sir John Pringle; the yellow fever, of the West Indies, so accurately described by Dr. J. Hunter; the Typhus Fever; the Angina Pectoris; the Croup; the Tic Douloureux; &c.; were unknown to physicians at the commencement of the eighteenth century.

The inflammatory fever, which formerly raged with so much violence, has changed its type, and given place to the low, nervous, putrid, jail or hospital fever.

The symptomatic affections of the stomach, which, a few years since, were termed *nervous*, are now said to be *bilious;* a term, which seems to imply that they are occasioned by bile, whereas it will appear that they arise solely from *Intemperance*. Dr. Whytt, on Nervous Diseases, remarks, that the symptomatic affections of the stomach "have been treated of by authors, under the names of Flatulent, Spasmodic, Hypochondriac or Hysteric. Of late, they have also got the name of *Nervous;* which appellation having been commonly given to many symptoms seemingly different and very obscure in their nature, has often made it be said that physicians have bestowed the character of *nervous* on all those disorders whose nature and causes they were ignorant of."

This remark of Dr. Whytt on the term *nervous*, may, with equal propriety, be applied to that of *bilious*.

The importance of the stomach is well known to every anatomist and physician. A late eminent physiologist, to whom the world is indebted for more light on this branch of science, than ever was diffused by any individual, has emphatically styled it "the life of the animal." It extends its influence to the brain and to the heart, governs every subordinate spring of the human frame, and diffuses health or disease to the most remote parts of the body. The mind itself is not exempt from the influence of its government; all our pleasant and happy feelings may date their origin from the unimpaired tone of this organ; which may be preserved to an advanced period of life by *temperance*. On the other hand ill-humour, peevishness, sadness, moroseness, and despondency appear in the train of *intemperance*.

The increased number of stomach complaints may, in a great measure, be attributed to modern luxury. If the bill of fare be examined, the table will be found covered with fish, flesh, and fowl of every description, that exuberant wealth can procure; intermixed with a profusion of artificial viands, in which innumerable articles imported from every quarter of the globe, contribute to heighten the poignancy of their flavour. If to these be added, the variety of vegetables, which the gardens produce, many of them eaten without culinary preparation, followed by a course of pastry, jellies, ices, &c.; and, lastly, by a dessert of sweetmeats, and every kind of fruit in season; we may indeed be astonished, not that the digestive powers of the stomach should be weakened, but, that they should be able, for one year, to withstand such deadly assaults.

The stomach at length becomes satiated, with the great variety of food it is compelled to receive; and, from being kept in a constant state of excitement, is rendered, sooner or later, incapable of performing its functions. Hence, and not from the bile, will arise the whole train of sympathetic affections of the stomach; which are ushered in, by flatulency, acid eructations, restlessness, or nausea.

The food *necessary* for the support and preservation of the body is plain and simple: milk, with a small portion of animal food, is all that can be required. The farther we depart from it, the more liable we are to Dyspeptic symptoms.

Dyspepsia, (from δυς *difficult,* ϖεπτω *to digest,)* is sufficiently characterized by the concurrence of the following symptoms; or some part of them, in the same individual. Loss of appetite; nausea, with occasional vomiting; sudden inflation, with pain in the stomach and bowels; acidity, with cramp or spasms; tremors; fainting; palpitation; incubus or night-mare; drowsiness; stupor; head-ach; cold legs and feet; dimness of sight; vertigo; incapability of steady thought; pyrosis or water-brash; and constipation of the bowels, alternately with Diarrhœa. When costive, the urine is high coloured and small in quantity; colourless, with an increased secretion, when the bowels are relaxed.

These sympathetic affections, formerly said to be *nervous,* and by many persons of the present day, *erroneously,* termed *bilious,* certainly arise from *intemperate* habits, inducing debility and rendering the stomach incapable of performing its office.

The gastric liquor, on which the solution of the food chiefly depends, may, from the debilitated state of the coats of the stomach, be rendered more or less active, producing material variations in the process of digestion, and exciting many of the symptoms enumerated.

The diminished energy of the stomach may, likewise, be induced by large and repeated draughts of warm watery liquors; by the free and too frequent use of tea and coffee; by tobacco or opium; by violent excitations of the mind; a sedentary life; late hours; the noxious fumes of heated and crowded rooms; exposure to the night air; and the want of a regular and uniform clothing: from these and other causes, the stomach becomes weakened, irritable, and incapable of digesting the most simple food.

To understand the manner in which the digestive organs suffer from intemperance, it may be necessary to sketch the outline of the process of digestion.

In health, it is uniform, and may be described in the following order.

The food taken into the mouth is broken down by mastication, till it is intimately mixed with the saliva, of which there is an abundant supply from the sublingual, submaxillary, and parotid glands. Being thus prepared, it is conveyed into the stomach, immediately subjected to the action of the gastric liquor, and reduced to a pulpy mass, named the *chyme:* it then passes from the stomach into the uppermost portion of the intestinal canal, the Duodenum, where it comes in contact with the *bile* and pancreatic juice, which likewise enter through their respective ducts into the Duodenum. The food converted into a pulpy mass, and mixed with the bile, moves slowly forward through the intestines: during its passage the *chyle* is separated from the *chyme,* by a portion of the absorbents, which, from the milky appearance of their contents, are here named Lacteals.

It is worthy of remark and must not pass unnoticed, that, although the *bile* has been blended with the *chyme*, it gives no yellow tint to the *chyle*.

The Lacteals, therefore, seem to have the power of selecting the chyle, and rejecting the bile.

The chyle is subsequently conveyed, through the Mesenteric Glands, into the Thoracic Duct, and from thence into the Vena Cava; where, incorporating with the blood, they enter the right Auricle and Ventricle of the heart. From the Ventricle they are urged on, through the pulmonary artery, into the lungs, in which they become intimately blended; receiving from the atmospheric air, that, which prepares them for general circulation throughout the body. From the lungs the blood returns, by the pulmonary vein, to the left auricle and ventricle: by the contraction of the left ventricle it is forced into the Aorta; which sends off branches to the head, and in its descent, other branches to the stomach, liver, spleen, pancreas, the kidneys, and bladder: it then divides into two equal branches, the one going to the right thigh and leg; the other to the left extremity. To each branch of the artery there is a corresponding vein, through which the blood is returned to the heart.

The arteries, as they proceed from the heart, divide and subdivide, from larger into smaller branches; the veins, on the contrary, gather their smaller branches into larger, till they unite in a common trunk, the Vena Cava.

Blood taken from an artery is florid, but, having passed from the artery into a vein, it becomes of a dark purple; by circulating through the lungs its florid colour is restored.

Chyle, examined by the microscope, appears to be a congeries of white globules; after mixing with the venous blood and passing through the lungs, the globules become florid; in fact the Chyle becomes blood.

From the above arrangement there is one deviation; the veins, returning from the Mesentery, the Spleen, and the Pancreas, unite and form the Vena Porta; which enters the liver, branching off through its substance as an artery. From this portion of *venous blood,* during its transit through the substance of the liver, the *bile is secreted* and is immediately absorbed by another set of vessels, named *Biliary Ducts;* which from exquisitely minute branches unite into larger, terminating in one duct, the *Ductus Hypaticus.* The bile, on entering this duct, may be considered as an excrement, no longer necessary to the system generally, nor to the completion of the functions of any particular organ. The Hepatic Duct, before it enters the Duodenum, is joined by the Cystic Duct coming from the gall bladder; they unite and form the Ductus Communis, which opens into the intestine.

If the Ductus Communis be obstructed by spasm, by inspissated bile or gall stones, so as to prevent the flow of the bile into the intestine, it would be thrown back upon the liver; were it not for the Septum, formed by the union of the coats of the Hepatic with the Cystic Duct, within the Ductus Communis. When the bile regurgitates, it throws the Septum upon the mouth of the Hepatic Duct; by this adaptation, the bile ascends the Cystic Duct, and enters the gall bladder, where it remains till the obstruction is removed.

That the bile should be secreted from that portion of the venous blood, which enters the liver through the Vena Porta, is not more wonderful, than the secretion of urine, by the kidneys, from the arterial blood, which enters into them through the renal arteries.

If blood be taken from the Vena Porta, before it enters the liver, or from the renal arteries, before they enter the kidneys, no bile can be discovered by chemical analysis, in the former, nor urine, in the latter. It is the office of these organs to withdraw from the circulating mass that, which if suffered to remain, would be injurious to the health of the individual; therefore, no sooner are the secretions of bile and urine perfected than they become excrementitious; and passages the most direct are provided, by Nature, to conduct them out of the body.

Thus, the manner in which the food is converted into *Chyle,* conveyed into the circulating mass, intimately blended with the blood, and distributed to the most minute and remote parts of the body, has been described.

Likewise, the manner in which the blood returns through the veins to the heart and to the liver; particularly that portion of it, from which, during its passage through the liver, the bile is secreted; instantly absorbed by the biliary ducts; conveyed through them into the Duodenum, below the orifice of the stomach; and afterwards discharged as excrementitious.

It, therefore, becomes manifest that whatever weakens the digestive energies, and prevents the formation of a pure and perfect *Chyle,* must sooner, or later, disturb the whole system. There can be no doubt, that, the process of digestion being deranged, an imperfect Chyle is formed, too crude to incorporate with the blood, without producing innumerable mischievous effects.

On a perfect Chyle depends the healthy secretion of the saliva, the gastric and pancreatic juices, the bile, the insensible perspiration, and the minor secretions, including the exhalations into the cavities of the joints. Combined with the blood it supplies all the waste of the body; gives energy to the brain; and supports the functions of the heart.

The stomach not only sympathizes with the vital organs, but, also with the most remote parts of the body: if it suffer, the whole system becomes disordered. This sympathetic affection being reciprocal, whatever disturbs the functions of the vital organs will diminish the energies of the stomach.

As the bile never enters the stomach, unless forced into it by vomiting,* hiccough, or some other convulsive action; it cannot be the remote, or proximate cause of the diminished powers of digestion. Neither is it absorbed, after it has passed the Hepatic Duct; otherwise, being mixed with the Chyme in the Duodenum, it would impart a yellow tint to the Chyle, which preserves uniformly a milky appearance in the Lacteals.

There are few diseases which annoy mankind, from infancy to old age, if we substract those which are induced by luxury and *intemperance.* From their agency diseases arise, that excite little or no alarm at their commencement; yet, in their progress become intractable, difficult to counteract, and oftentimes destructive.

Gout, itself, originates in the same source; and although, in some instances, there may be just ground for considering it hereditary, yet, generally it may be traced to excess, in eating or drinking: hence, it is familiar to the rich, but, known only by name to the labouring cottager or common soldier.

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* "Vomiting, by whatever means excited, if often repeated, with violent straining, will force the bile into the stomach."—*Cullen.*

The Dyspeptic symptoms, before enumerated, being indicative of a debilitated state of the stomach, induced by *intemperance;* the means most likely to relieve and finally to remove them, will be the avoidance of all stimulants, (that may act directly or indirectly, on the stomach,) and the use of appropriate medicine.

Injuries inflicted on this organ, from external causes, or by the morbid state of the neighbouring Viscera, have not been noticed; these observations being confined to the affections of the stomach, which, although erroneously, have hitherto been considered either *Nervous* or *Bilious.*

The remote cause of Dyspepsia being intemperance, it matters not, whether it be intemperate exercise of the mind or body; indulgence in late hours; exposure to the impure air of heated and crowded apartments; or excess in what we eat or drink; either of these excitements, if long continued, will weaken the digestive organs and induce Dyspepsia; therefore they must be strictly avoided, before the patient can hope for the relief or cure of his sufferings.

Temperance in all things must be rigidly enforced, particularly in the exercise of the body or mind, and in the quantity and quality of the aliment.

Whenever it is practicable, all former habits should be abandoned.

This being observed, the following brief outline of a dietetic plan may serve as a guide.

For Breakfast, tea, coffee, or cocoa, with a large proportion of milk, (together not exceeding two-thirds of a pint;) with toasted or stale bread; cold beef or mutton. New bread and hot rolls are prohibited.

For Dinner, the quantity of animal food should greatly exceed the vegetable; being more easily digested, affording a much greater proportion of nutriment, and not being so liable to run into those acetous fermentations, which occasion flatulency and pain in the stomach and bowels.

The quality and quantity of animal food must, in some measure, depend on the habits and palate of the patient.

Salted meats should be used sparingly; beef and mutton, game and poultry, (roasted or boiled,) are articles that will agree with the majority of dyspeptic stomachs, better than veal, lamb, or any other animal diet in the extensive catalogue of the larder.

Meat rather underdone, with the gravy in it, is not only more nutritious and more easily digested, but a smaller quantity will be sufficient to allay the cravings of hunger; the stomach will not suffer from being overloaded, and the unpleasant feelings consequent on a full meal will be avoided.

To white fish there can be no objection; but salmon, and other rich and oily fish, should be rejected.

All stimulants, however grateful to the palate or apparently required by the stomach, must be cautiously employed; they may occasion temporary relief, but they will eventually increase the evil they are intended to remove. In this proscription highly seasoned viands are included, also spices and soups, with all the pernicious farrago of modern cookery.

Were the invalid to make his meal from a single joint, either roasted or boiled, with no other vegetable than a mealy potatoe, moistened with the juice of the meat, (not with that unwholesome luxury melted butter,) and without the addition of pastry, he would soon be sensible of the advantage of so doing.

Due attention being paid to the quantity and quality of the food, four or five hours should pass between each meal; that the process of digestion may not be disturbed, and that due time be given to form a pure and perfect Chyle. Thus, breakfast may be taken at eight or nine o'clock; luncheon at one; dinner at five or six.

As a beverage, one table spoonful of brandy, in half a pint of cold water, may be taken with the dinner; unless the patient should complain of acidity or heart-burn; in that case, as Soda Water would be a corrective, it should be preferred, with, or without the same quantity of brandy.

The lighter the supper, the more pleasant will be the repose of the succeeding night.

Regular exercise in the open air must not be omitted.

The patient will require, at least, seven or eight hours rest in bed; nothing contributes to renovate the mind or body, after fatigue, more than repose: sleep, if not natural, should be induced by gentle opiates.

Reading, where much study is requisite; business, that demands calculation; or any other subject, that may powerfully excite the mind, must, for a season, be relinquished; and give place to amusements and change of scene; by a removal to the sea coast, or to the pure air of Malvern.

It has been observed, that a total abandonment of former habits would be necessary; to this general rule there may be some exceptions. One individual abstaining from wine, finds his spirits exhilarated and perceives a daily improvement in his health. Another becomes depressed and desponding, with loss of appetite, &c. In this case, the quantity of wine should be *gradually* diminished; but, at an advanced period of life it would be imprudent to withdraw the stimulus, which long continued habits have, in some degree, rendered necessary, without substituting brandy and water.

It may be superfluous to add that fruits, particularly unripe fruits, salads, and all other vegetables, which have not undergone some culinary process, cannot be eaten with impunity.

Agreeably to the plan that has been laid down, each meal may be regulated; nevertheless it is not presumed that this brief outline will suit every stomach; the human constitution is too variable to admit the indulgence of such a presumption.

The constitution that has been impaired by excess may, in some degree, be restored by temperance; for the same care which would have preserved it in full vigour, will, no doubt, contribute to its restoration.

Should the Dyspeptic patient be tempted to exceed the bounds of moderation, he will become restless, his stomach distended, the blood vessels surcharged, the brain powerfully excited, and his whole frame agitated: these sensations are oftentimes followed by vertigo, or by an oppressive head-ach. On the contrary, so long as he restricts himself to plain diet, and to a moderate quantity at each meal; at the same time avoiding strong liquors, and persevering in a proper course of medicine; he will be sensible of a daily improvement in his health; and after a few months, of a total release from all dyspeptic pains and penalties.

Above all general rules, the patient's own experience will be, in point of regimen, his best physician: a careful attention to his feelings, after the use of different aliments, will teach him which to select, or to avoid.

When the bowels are brought into regular and daily action, the patient may return to the moderate use of generous wine; and no longer confine himself to the strict regimen herein prescribed.

This outline is submitted not only to those who are suffering from Dyspepsia, but, likewise, to those who, *from present indulgence*, may suffer hereafter. The latter have only to adopt a moderate regimen, and keep the bowels in regular action, to avoid all dyspeptic ills. The former, who are suffering from Dyspepsia, not only require a temperate and strict regimen, but, likewise, the aid of such remedies as are known to strengthen the stomach and bowels.

Costiveness, the constant concomitant of Dyspepsia, must be obviated; hence, every medicine prescribed to renovate the energies of the stomach should, at the same time, act as a gentle aperient: for, although much must depend on attention to regimen, yet, without the assistance of medicine, the recovery will be protracted and doubtful.

The strict observance of a spare and simple diet, frequently fails even to *relieve* the sympathetic affections of the stomach, without the aid of tonic and aperient medicines; by which, the stomach and bowels are brought into regular action, the functions of the digestive organs renovated, and the appetite restored. The Lacteals being freed from the obstructing impurities, the Chyle passes freely into them, and is distributed to all parts of the system.

The case of an invalid, *said to be bilious*, who was afflicted with constant and excruciating pains in the head, combined with many of the characteristic symptoms of Dyspepsia, may be adduced in illustration of the above remarks.

He observed a rigid abstinence from every article of food, likely to occasion acidity or indigestion; yet, after persevering for three months in this course, no salutary relief was obtained. The smallest quantity of lamb, veal, pork, or fat meat of any kind taken into the stomach, excited all the miseries attendant on indigestion. Being advised to have recource to the daily use of a mild aperient, combined with a tonic medicine, the action of the bowels became regular, the head-ach was removed, and the invalid enabled, after a few weeks, to partake of every variety of food in moderation.

As in most cases of Dyspepsia, the stomach and bowels are lined with an excess of mucus, a moderate dose of Calomel should prepare the way for the milder purgatives, so essential to the perfect recovery of the patient.

The Calomel, when necessary, should be taken at bed time, and a mild aperient draught the next morning: this must be considered as preparatory, only, to the use of the tonic and aperient medicines, before mentioned.

Calomel, although a powerful and perfectly safe remedy in skilful hands, has, from the frequent and indiscriminate use of it, (by nurses and others equally uninformed,) proved oftentimes destructive. During its operation, the patient should carefully avoid acids, and exposure to cold air.

Children, by the injudicious use of Calomel, as well as by improper food too frequently administered, become Dyspeptic before they are twelve-months old. When a child cries the nurse attributes it to the want of nourishment, and by her agency it is frequently fed; every repetition, by distending the stomach, adds to the distress of the infant; for, although the food of children be simple, yet, as their digestive organs are weaker than at a more advanced period of life, the stomach requires an interval of some hours to convert it into Chyle.

An unremitting attention to dyspeptic symptoms, during a period of fifty years, has brought under the observation of the writer a great variety of tonic and aperient medicines, from which he has selected the Antidyspeptic Pill;* as the most effective, in gradually restoring the energies of the stomach; exciting a regular peristaltic motion of the bowels; affording speedy relief to urgent symptoms; and permanently restoring the health, and invigorating the constitution of the invalid.

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* Sold by Messrs. SAVORY, MOORE, & DAVIDSON, 136, New Bond-Street, and 220, Regent-street.

No combination can be formed, from the whole Materia Medica, more likely to produce these beneficial effects. A proper perseverance in the use of this pill will remove habitual costiveness, than which there is not a more deleterious symptom.

The dose is one pill every night: no time should be suffered to pass without endeavouring to obtain a free action of the bowels, once in twenty-four hours.

The bowels of different persons being more or less irritable, the dose must be varied accordingly. One pill will be, generally, sufficient: it may, however, in some instances, be necessary to increase the dose to two or three pills; especially, where the costive habit has been long established. On the other hand, in irritable habits, one pill may operate more than once: should this happen, the pill may be taken every other night.

The dose must be regulated, therefore, at the discretion of the individual.

FINIS.